

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE: 2022  
Middle Smithfield Township - Monroe County, Pennsylvania

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## **6. A Plan for Community Facilities**

The Plan for Community Facilities addresses the Township's provision of municipal facilities and services as it accommodates future development. In addition to focusing on the Township facilities: schools, libraries, police services and fire protection services, and parks, the plan offers recommendations for coordinating the provision of these services. It is this coordination that will enable the Township to provide the necessary services to support growth in the Township, but also to deliver them at a reasonable cost and while maintaining a fiscally balanced budget.

Existing community facilities are depicted on Map 7-1.

### **A. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Community facilities in Middle Smithfield Township include the Schoonover Municipal Center, the Middle Smithfield Township Community & Cultural Center, the Whispering Pines Banquet Hall, and the Wooddale Garage.

The Schoonover Municipal Center on Municipal Drive is conveniently located close to Route 209 corridor. The renovated Municipal Building was dedicated in June of 2006 after undergoing extensive rehabilitation to add approximately 1,200 square feet of office and public meeting space, as well as critically needed storage. These renovations followed the relocation of the Roads Department to a nearby facility.

Also located nearby is the Middle Smithfield Township Community & Cultural Center, at 5200 Milford Road, and is located within Echo Lake Park. Among other programs and offerings, the Community & Cultural Center is the home of the library of the Smithfields. This branch library is one of three associated with the regional Eastern Monroe Library System. The main library, the Hughes Library is located in Stroudsburg. Additional library services are available through the East Stroudsburg University, a few miles south of Marshalls Creek, and at the individual schools located within the Township.

The library system is funded through County property taxes with additional assistance and fundraising efforts of the Friends of the Eastern Monroe Public Library.

The Middle Smithfield Township Community & Culture Center, in addition to housing the Library of the Smithfields, offers 6,000 square feet of space for public use, approximately half of which is a Community Room available for 501c3 charitable organizations for meetings, public events, fundraisers, and the like. The Great Hall at the entrance will serve as a small local museum, with rotating displays of importance to local history, such as the Flood of '55, the Marshalls Creek Explosion, and the Marshalls Creek Mastodon, as well as exhibits on loan from other organizations such as the National Park Service.

This area also has designated exhibit space for local artists and art organizations for rotating art displays. The building is equipped with a generator, elevator, professional kitchen, and showers so that it can serve as a Red Cross certified emergency shelter in times of need.

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The Whispering Pines Banquet Hall is located at 1445 Big Ridge Drive within the Country Club of the Poconos Municipal Golf Course. The building has a main dining room with 2400 square feet and seating for up to 150 guests. Other amenities include a dance floor, lobby, full bar, small dining room with seating for 30 guests, elevator, and kitchen. Middle Smithfield Township has made this facility available to the public for private and public functions since 2013, including weddings, birthdays, fundraisers, and community events. The building also contains restrooms, the golf office and pro shop, and storage. The building's basement also has locker rooms, bathrooms, storage, and a pool, which is no longer in use.

Police Services, Fire Protection, Emergency Medical Services, and Public Works

Policing services were provided by the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), based in Swiftwater until the facility closed in 2017. There are new PSP barracks in Pocono Township, which was built in 2017. The PSP no longer have a substation at the Township building, and the PSP do most of their work from their vehicles.

As the demand for services rises along with population growth, the Township acknowledges that there may be a need to explore opportunities for a local police force, possibly through a regional sharing agreement with other municipalities. To this end, the Township will need to make regular assessments of the capacity of the current police force to deliver efficient and effective services. To date, the Township has completed two police studies, one conducted through DCED and the other utilizing a citizen task force. Future monitoring should focus on the level of service currently provided, including the number and type of calls, call locations, and response times. This data will provide background information for a strategic plan that projects future levels of demand, as well as the ability to determine if and when a new arrangement would be needed to ensure sufficient levels of service.

The Township has a Public Works facility in Wooddale, for the storage of winter vehicle and winter road materials. This facility enables the Roads Department to react quickly to storms as well as increase service and safety by decreasing travel time to reload road materials.

In regards to fire protection services, there are three local fire companies, all manned by volunteer staff. These stations are the Marshalls Creek Fire Company, the Bushkill Fire Company and the Shawnee Fire Company. All calls for the stations are dispatched through the Monroe County Control Center, which handles 911 for all Monroe County municipalities and Lehman Township in Pike County.

Of these, the Shawnee Fire Company is the smallest of the three in terms of Township service area; followed by Bushkill Fire Company with Marshalls Creek Fire Company serving the largest portion of the Township. Due to firefighter personnel limitations, both Marshalls Creek and Shawnee are dual dispatched during weekday coverage hours. All three companies work as mutual aid companies for each other.

Just as the Township needs to assess the need for a local, joint police force in the

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future, there are concerns over the continued abilities of the fire protection to continue to attract and maintain a sufficient volunteer base. As the volume of calls increases with the population, it may be necessary to establish core paid positions, especially during daytime hours, which are most difficult to staff.

Emergency Medical Services including emergency response for ambulance services for both Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support (paramedic) services are primarily handled by Bushkill Emergency Corps. There are three primary stations located in Marshalls Creek, Foxmoor and Bushkill. Paramedic services are provided on a 24-hour-a-day basis through the Marshalls Creek station with Basic Life Support services rotated through the remaining stations to maintain a two station coverage at all times. Marshalls Creek also has an ambulance that is on duty on a parttime basis. To meet its long range needs, the organization projects a need to increase its operation to include additional unit availability and staff as the population increases. All emergency calls are dispatched through the county's 911 center, Monroe County Control Center. Lehman Township recently started their own ambulance group and serves a small part of the border between the Townships. Also, Pike County Handles the calls from that area.

Staffing of Bushkill Emergency Corps is provided with a combination of career and volunteer staff. The agency operates primarily as a user funded operation with donations from outside sources such as municipal funding as ancillary, but necessary to meet the growing needs of the Township. With increasing population and increases in aging residents, municipal support of all natures will become more important.

Secondary EMS response is provided by Suburban EMS Services and additional mutual aid resources are available through agreements as well as through dispatch of agencies through Monroe County Control Center.

EMS Coverage is illustrated on Map 6-1.

Educational Facilities

Middle Smithfield Township is a part of the East Stroudsburg Area School District (ESASD). The school district covers approximately 214 square miles, comprised of the East Stroudsburg Borough and the townships of Smithfield, Middle Smithfield, and Price, in Monroe County, and Lehman and Porter townships in Pike County. There are 10 schools located throughout the District that had an enrollment of approximately 6,407 students for the 2021-2022 school year.

Two of the District's schools are located in the Township: Middle Smithfield Elementary and Resica Elementary. There are two Intermediate Schools: Lehman Intermediate and JT Lambert Schools. In addition, the Township is served by East Stroudsburg High School North and East Stroudsburg High School South.

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The growth of the student population will require close monitoring to ensure that the student to teacher ratio, classroom size, and other facilities are capable of adequately managing the population while providing a quality service. Expansion of school facilities will not only require attention to the school buildings themselves, but to the bus fleet and the ability to fill positions as needed with qualified professionals.

In addition to the public school system, the Monroe County Technical Institute in Bartonsville, Pennsylvania supplements and builds on the educational opportunities for high school students in the ESASD.

The closest opportunities for higher education are East Stroudsburg University, located just a short distance away in East Stroudsburg, and Northampton Community College. The Community College's main location is in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, with a branch maintained in Tannersville.

In addition, there is a Cyber Academy that is part of the ESASD, which offers an alternative to traditional brick and mortar school. The East Stroudsburg Cyber Academy provides access to an online, collaborative, and self-paced learning environment that: provides challenging learning opportunities in all academic areas; facilitates 21<sup>st</sup> century skills; offers course instruction by ESASD Pennsylvania Certified Teachers; and offers guidance services by ESASD Guidance Counselors. Students will be able to combine these skills with the effective use of technology to succeed in current and future education or jobs, and are able to direct their learning path.

Goal for Community Facilities

The Township's goal for Community Facilities and Services is to **provide effective services for the Township residents, and support the regional provision of services by others.**

There are two objectives for achieving this goal:

1. Expand the provision of municipal services as needed to keep pace with growth.
2. Investigate opportunities to expand and provide new services in the Township.
3. Support existing municipal services.

Recommendations for Community Facilities (General)

The need for expansion, updating, and maintenance of the Township's facilities is a certainty as the demand for administrative, emergency, educational, and recreational services increases over the next 10 to 20 years. The Township's ability to provide these services as needed and in a cost effective manner will greatly depend on its ability to plan for their delivery, whether independently or in a regional context.

1. Emergency Services

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- a. Cooperate with State, County, and adjacent municipalities to ensure the adequate provision of regional services such as ambulance and public safety.
- b. Establish or participate in the establishment of a long range, strategic plan that closely monitors response times and service levels for emergency services. In regards to fire protection, this plan needs to include projections for future staffing and equipment needs, and particularly the establishment of paid positions.

In regards to Policing, there is a growing need for the Township to investigate the provision of a local police force, and the feasibility of a joint, regional force. Initial discussions have tentatively explored the option of a joint force with a willing neighbor. The benefits of such an arrangement would be numerous, including the sharing of start-up and equipment costs that would make it more cost effective in the short term.

2. Educational Services

- a. While the East Stroudsburg Area School District is responsible for school planning, the Township needs to be a vital partner in these efforts to communicate and plan for the community's future. The Township can ensure that this feedback is provided by developing a mechanism for the ESASD to review and provide input on pending development proposals under the Township's review.
- b. Require fiscal impact statements that analyze selected developments' impact on the School District.
- c. Encourage developers to cooperate with the School District to acquire land for additional facilities as needed.
- d. Encourage compact development that concentrates housing around schools, thereby allowing students to walk to school and other facilities.
- e. Encourage sufficient housing for the teaching and administrative staff of the school district. As housing affordability becomes a greater concern, maintaining quality staff that are able to live and work within the community is a challenge that affects the school system, the family, and potentially every taxpayer. This issue is also addressed in the Plan for Housing, Chapter 5.
- f. Explore opportunities for a community college and other social services.
- g. Seek opportunities to create youth and senior centers in the Township.
- h. Encourage community based nonprofit organizations.

3. Other Municipal Services

- a. Develop a capital improvements program to support existing municipal facilities and services.
- b. Cooperate with regional entities and adjacent municipalities to support regional facilities.
- c. Develop a monitoring program to ensure existing facilities and services meet projected needs for the future, including solid waste and recycling management services.